



Department of Justice

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**NEW YORK COMMERCIAL PRINTING SALESMAN
PLEADS GUILTY TO BID RIGGING AND RELATED CONSPIRACY CHARGE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A sales representative for a New York supplier of commercial printing pleaded guilty yesterday to rigging bids and conspiring to pay kickbacks at Impact Communications, Inc., a Manhattan-based advertising agency, the Department of Justice announced.

In charges filed yesterday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, Steven J. Briggin, a sales representative of Darbert Offset Corp., a Manhattan printing company, pleaded guilty to one count of rigging bids to supply Impact with commercial printing and one count of engaging in a conspiracy to commit mail fraud by paying kickbacks to Impact's purchasing agent.

According to the charges, Briggin, along with others, participated in a scheme to rig bids in order to divide Impact's contracts for commercial printing and make it appear that there was competition for commercial printing contracts, when there was not. In addition, Briggin paid kickbacks totaling at least \$150,000 to Impact's purchasing agent. Last month, the owner of Darbert, Bertram J. Cohen, pleaded guilty to participating in the kickback scheme at Impact and to a related tax charge.

"These charges demonstrate the Antitrust Division's determination to prosecute anti-competitive schemes in the graphics and advertising industry," said James M. Griffin, Deputy Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Division's Criminal Enforcement Program.

The bid-rigging charge, a violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1, carries a maximum penalty of three years imprisonments and a \$350,000 fine. The conspiracy charge, a violation of 18 U.S.C. §

371, carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victim of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine. In addition, the defendant could be ordered to pay restitution to any victim for the full amount of that victim's loss.

The charges against Briggin are the latest to arise out of an ongoing federal probe of bid rigging, commercial bribery, and tax-related offenses in the graphics materials and services and advertising industries. The investigation is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's New York Field Office, with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

Anyone with information concerning bid rigging, bribery, tax offenses or fraud in the graphic materials and services or advertising industry should contact the New York Field Office of the Antitrust Division at (212) 264-0679 or the New York Division of the FBI at (212) 384-3252.

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